

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE

Rural District of Norham and Islandshires

For the Year ending 31st December, 1918.

*To the Chairman and Members of the Norham and Islandshires
Rural District Council.*

I beg to submit to you, as *interim* Medical Officer, the Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1918.

The Report is again required to be as abbreviated as possible, and the usual Statistical Forms supplied by the Local Government Board will not be included.

Area.—The area of the District is 47,072 acres.

Population.—The population, according to the census of 1911, was 5,830. Owing to the variable conditions prevailing, the actual population may be below this figure. The civil population, as supplied, is 5,656, and upon these figures the various calculations are made for statistical purposes—5,656 for births, 5,074 for deaths.

Births.—The births registered during the year numbered 106, being 54 males and 52 females, seven being illegitimate. This is an increase of 28 as compared with last year, and is equal to a birth rate of 18·72 per 1,000 of the population. This is a great improvement on last year's figures, but much below what is required.

Deaths.—The deaths registered in the District numbered 61, which, after correction through information supplied by the Registrar General relating to transferable deaths, the number was increased by nine, giving the corrected number of 70 for the whole District. The death rate, calculated on this number, is therefore, with all due corrections made, 13·78 per 1,000 of the population. This is an increase of 10 as compared with last year, and a corresponding increased rate of 1·96 per 1,000 of the total number registered. Of the total number registered, 24 were of persons 65 years and upwards. Three deaths were subject to Coroner's inquest—one accident, one pneumonia, and one convulsions. 18 deaths occurred from Influenza complicated with Pneumonia, five deaths occurred from Phthisis, four from Cancer, and Heart Disease, Bronchitis, and Pneumonia were respectively seven, three, and three. Most of the other deaths occurred in persons of mature years. 16 were between the ages of 45 and 65 years.

Infant Mortality.—The deaths among children under one year number seven. This is an increase of three as compared with last year, but still compares favourably with the average of the last few years.

Deaths from Zymotic Diseases.—These include the following from Notifiable Diseases—Phthisis, five; Scarlet Fever, none, giving a mortality rate of ·975 per 1,000. It is notable that there were no deaths from Measles or Scarlet Fever.

Infectious Diseases.—The following Infectious Diseases were notified during the year:—

Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	...	6
Measles	...	...	...	...	...	11
Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	...	...	2
Erysipelas	...	...	...	...	...	3
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	...	...	...	...	...	6
						28

This is equal to a rate of 4·95 per 1,000 of the population. During the year 18 deaths occurred from Influenza complicated with Pneumonia, which represents a quarter of the total deaths recorded.

Housing.—In the last Annual Report I referred to the urgency of complying with the Local Government Board's requirements in providing suitable and adequate dwellings for the Working Classes. Further, I stated that, although admitting the scheme was complex, it only needed the whole Council to approach the matter with energy and honest endeavour for a satisfactory solution to be arrived at. An energetic Committee has been appointed, who have visited the greater part of the District, and likely sites have been examined with a view to their suitability. I consider it was a mistake when the Council did not accept the Committee's application for the increased number of 150 houses instead of 50.

Venereal Disease.—I cannot let the present opportunity pass without grave warning against the growing danger to the public health from the venereal infection that will certainly follow on demobilisation, and that efficient precautions be taken to combat this dangerous situation. It has been proved during the war that venereal diseases can be controlled by the adoption of simple sanitary measures. In spite of all that is being done to cope with this evil, the frightfulness of the menace to innocent women and children, and to the entire nation, is underestimated.



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Influenza.—The chief medical feature of the past year has undoubtedly been the terrible epidemic of Influenza, which in three waves has devastated this country and the world generally. When it is taken into account that the greater number of deaths among those who have been victims could have been prevented, it makes one think that the 10,000 lives lost in London and the 100,000 in this country generally during the short period of eight or nine weeks could mostly be living to-day if only an increased army of workers in preventative medicine were in existence. Now that a Ministry of Health has been appointed, it goes without saying that the shortcomings of the past will be rectified, and that increased and properly guided measures will now be inaugurated. With proper financial assistance from the State, the benefits accruing to the health of the nation will be incalculable.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

P. A. DEWAR HEAD,

Interim Medical Officer of Health.

NORHAM, February, 1919.

Norham and Islandshires Rural District Council.

Annual Report of the Inspector of Nuisances

For the Year 1918.

During the year ended 31st December, 1918, periodical visits of inspection were made to the several parts of the District. During this period no statutory notices were served. I have issued informal notices, and also given verbal intimations to those responsible where nuisances existed. These notices mainly dealt with choked drains and gullies and foul ashpits.

Sanitation.—Owing to the scarcity of material and the high cost of what little is available, combined with the scarcity of labour, no new schemes of water or drainage were undertaken. At Horncliffe an old sewer pipe was replaced with a new 6 inch sanitary pipe, laid at such a depth and gradient that will become a component part of any Sewerage Scheme that may be installed in the village. Minor and necessary repairs have been carried out on several of the water supplies in the District. As soon as circumstances permit, the Council and those others responsible will require to consider the advisability of undertaking improvements in water supplies and drainage systems.

Dwelling Houses.—Inspections of dwelling houses have been made throughout the District. Owing to the War and the circumstances caused thereby, only urgent and necessary repairs were carried out. In the very old houses in the District dampness, want of light and ventilation are prevalent. Now that the causes that put a check upon construction work have been removed, and Government assistance guaranteed for re-construction work upon right lines, an improvement in the housing of the working classes will be looked forward to.

Disinfection.—Premises at the following places have been disinfected :—Norham, Shoreswood Red House, Ancroft, Berrington Law, Scremerston, East Ord ; also the Schools at Norham, Tillmouth, Cornhill, Shoreswood, Duddo, Horncliffe, East Ord, Thornton, Scremerston, Cheswick, Beal, and Fenwick.

Dairies and Cow Sheds.—Inspections have been paid to the Dairies and Cow Sheds in the District, orders for lime washing being attended to.

Factories and Workshops.—Inspections have been made to the various Workshops. No contravention of the Regulations were found. There are none underground.

Slaughter Houses.—There are two Slaughter Houses in the District, both situated in Norham. I have always found them cleanly and well kept.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

J. ROMANS LAKE,

Sanitary Inspector.

EAST ORD, BERWICK-ON-TWEED,
10th March, 1919.

